

THE Vermont Journal

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Chester Selectboard makes appointments, revises cannabis board

BY NICK GIBERTI
The Vermont Journal

CHESTER, Vt. – The Chester Selectboard met on Wednesday, April 19, primarily to appoint and reappoint members of the planning commission and the developmental review board (DRB), as well as to make revisions to the composition of Chester's Cannabis Control Board.

Before those topics could be addressed, however, several matters were discussed which had been topics in previous board meetings, the most notable of which was an update on the Julian quarry. Multiple residents expressed their frustration with the fact that the quar-

ry continued to operate, despite alleged violations of Vermont's Act 250 and the continued pollution of nearby waterways. The selectboard assured residents that they were working on the matter, while at the same time noting that the issue was now in the hands of the legal system, and that it therefore would be a "drawn out" process. "I don't want to disappoint people and [say] that it's all going to be fixed in a month or two," said Selectboard Chair Arne Jonynas. "I could see this dragging on for a while... It's in the legal system now, which means lawyers and courts."

"To be clear," interjected board member Arianna

Knapp, "none of that means we're not taking action... We have initiated the process with our legal counsel."

The board then appointed Chester's Town Clerk/Treasurer. Chester residents voted last year to make this an appointed, rather than elected, position. Deb Aldrich was appointed to the position, with the selectboard noting that she has worked for the town for 40 years, and thanking her for her service.

After then confirming the Vermont Journal as one of the Town of Chester's papers of record, the board went on to conduct interviews for the three open positions on the planning commission, for which

there were four interested parties. A major theme of these interviews was the applicant's vision for Chester in the future, with an emphasis on how they would address Chester's need for new housing while maintaining its distinctive town character. The board went into executive session for nearly an hour to deliberate the appointments, re-emerging after conferring with Planning Commission Chair Hugh Quinn, and made their appointments. Tim Roper and Barry Pinke were reappointed to their positions on the commission for three years each, while John Cummings was appointed to the remainder of a two-year term

left vacant by selectboard member Peter Hudkins when he resigned due to the selectboard's conflict of interest policy. Robert Greenfield was unopposed for his reappointment to the DRB.

The board then adopted the town's local emergency management plan, and turned their attention to revising the composition of the town's cannabis control board. When the board was put in place a year prior, it was composed of seven members, with Knapp as chair. In the interim, two members had stepped down "due to conflicts." Knapp suggested that the cannabis control board be permanently reduced to five members, because, as

she told the selectboard, "when you empaneled the commission, both the state and local towns believed that the towns would have an active role. As the state put everything into place, there was nothing left for the towns to do." This, she argued, made a seven-member control board too large for its current function. The rest of the selectboard agreed, and approved a motion to reduce the cannabis control board to five members, including one selectboard member.

The Chester Selectboard is scheduled to meet next on Wednesday, May 3, at 6:30 p.m., on the second floor of the Chester Town Hall.

Ludlow Rotary Club to host annual Penny Sale

LUDLOW, Vt. – For the 65th time, the Ludlow Rotary Club's annual Penny Sale is upon us. You do not want to miss the fun. The sale will be held on Saturday, April 29, at the Ludlow Elementary School Gym, and will begin promptly at 6 p.m.

There will be over 300 prizes on display, many of which could very well end up in your possession. You can see some of the items donated by our local businesses at the prize window on Main Street at DJ's Res-

taurant. Admission is free, and refreshments will be available.

A cash raffle will conclude during the evening. Top prize is \$500 cash, and you do not need to be present to win. Should the winner be in the building, an additional \$25 will be added to the winning ticket. Raffle tickets may be purchased online at www.ludlowrotary.com.

This annual event of the Ludlow Rotary Club supports our scholarship pro-

gram. Over the past two decades, we have awarded local graduating seniors over \$235,000 in scholarships to pursue higher education.

The Ludlow Rotary Club is active locally and internationally. We strive to promote peace and good will. Meetings are held on Tuesdays at DJ's in Ludlow, from 12:15-1:30 p.m. New members are welcome. Any questions, please call Kim at 802-228-4000 or Jim at 802-228-8866.

Thank you to all our local businesses, who are so generous with their donations. This event is successful due to our many businesses. Maple syrup, ski passes, garden equipment, fishing poles, cash, restaurant gift cards, and too much more to name has been donated to this event.

Whether this is your first or 65th time attending, we are looking forward to seeing you for this mud season event.



Skiing at 100

CHESTER, Vt. – Laura Caravatt of Andover Road still enjoys an afternoon of cross country skiing even at 100. PHOTO PROVIDED

Okemo Valley Women's Club April news

LUDLOW, Vt. – The GFWC Okemo Valley Women's Club met Monday, April 10, for their monthly business meeting at the Black River Valley Senior Center in Ludlow.

Their speaker for the month was Jane Wojcek, a local potter. Jane explained her inspirations, how she first started making pottery, and her love of creating beauty. She brought several of her pieces to show to the club. Much of her work involves nature, with pieces made with rhubarb leaves, ferns, Queen Anne's lace, and hosta leaves – all incorporated into the pottery itself. Jane also is known for her cutouts in the pottery. She makes kiln fired and white fire pottery in her studio, located on Brooks Road in Ludlow. Most of her work is currently sold on Facebook or at craft fairs, though she hopes to have her studio open to the public at some point.

After a fascinating presentation by Jane, the club held a business meeting to discuss ongoing and upcoming projects and volunteer events. At the meeting, preliminary plans were made for the May Dress A Girl project, which benefits young girls around the world to help protect them



Jane Wojcek speaking to the OVWC. PHOTO PROVIDED

from human trafficking. The club voted to support NewStory Center in Rutland with a cash donation. NewStory is an emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, and human trafficking. Also discussed was participating in the GFWC Day of National Service on Sept. 30, a national effort to help end hunger. The club women were pleased to announce that the state Barbara Jean Barker Scholarship of \$1,000 has been awarded to five recipients this year. The scholarship is given annually at the state level to displaced women who wish to return to the workforce. The club will hold their annual Garden Project to benefit Mountainside House in early June, and

several fund raising events over the summer to benefit our local community, in addition to the club's annual scholarship program. The club also planned their annual banquet and summer barbeque social events as the 2022-23 club year winds down.

Several club women attended the GFWC State Meeting in Castleton, Vt. on Saturday, April 15. Clubs from around the state gathered to share ideas and discuss their individual clubs' projects, as well as state and national projects. In addition, Northeast Regional President-elect Tina Smith, Northeast Regional President Libby Wers, and Northeast Regional Secretary Bev Pallmerine were present. Each club president reviewed their club's activities and events over the past year, as did the state president. Also, a memorial service was held for departed club members, with flowers for each. The speaker for the state meeting was Avaloy Lanning, executive director of NewStory Center. NewStory fosters a culture in Rutland County that does not tolerate violence, creating a

community that offers a compassionate path to a lifetime of safety. The NewStory Center Emergency Shelter Program offers a safe, peaceful, home-like environment for survivors and their children to begin their new chapter. The center also has a 24/7 Crisis Hotline and support groups. NewStory has been helping victims for over 40 years, and is currently planning an expansion to increase their emergency shelter capacity.

The April meeting of the GFWC Okemo Valley Women's Club was their last meeting of the 2022-23 year. The next meeting is planned for Monday, September 11 at 6:30 p.m., at the Black River Valley Senior Center in Ludlow. The club always welcomes new members. For information, contact President Penny Trick at 802-975-0313, Membership Chair Suzanne Garvey at 802-236-4341, or any member. GFWC is the General Federation of Women's Clubs, an international women's organization dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service.

BRGNS annual Spring Rummage Sale

LUDLOW, Vt. – Black River Good Neighbor Services (BRGNS) will hold its annual Spring Rummage Sale at Fletcher Farm, 611 Route 103 South in Ludlow, on Friday and Saturday, May 12 and 13, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

This gigantic sale includes a barn full of spring and summer clothing for the entire family, a boutique, shoe department, sporting goods department, linens, books, furniture, bake sale, and grills. All in all, it is an amazing amount of merchandise at rock bottom, unreasonable-to-refuse prices.

Proceeds from the sale benefit Black River Good Neighbor Services food and financial assistance

programs. According to Executive Director, Krey Kellington, "all monies are essentially directed back into our community, where most needed."

Funds raised will help cover food, cost of utilities, heating fuel, and rent for qualified individuals and families residing in Ludlow, Mount Holly, Belmont, Cavendish, Proctorsville, and Plymouth. Mark your calendar and come explore the many unique bargains on May 12 and 13. Donations of furniture and household goods are also most appreciated. To arrange a donation drop-off, please call 802-228-3663.

For further details, please contact Krey Kellington at Black River Good Neighbor Services, 37B Main Street, Ludlow, at 802-228-3663 or kkellingtonbrgns@gmail.com.

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DEADLINES

The deadline for all content is **Friday at 12 p.m.** for the following Wednesday publication.

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One final poetry experience

CHESTER, Vt. – Weekly celebrations of poetry by former Vermont Poet Laureate Syd Lea, regional poetry slammers, and poetry-lovers who brought their favorite nature poems to read along the Brookside Trail on Earth Day, will culminate in front of the Academy Building in the heart of Chester's Historic District on Saturday, April 29. Don't forget to bring a folding chair so you can sit comfortably as you soak in the poems.

During the Stone Village Poetry Experience's final celebration of National Poetry Month, five local poets will read from their poetry. The poets – whose styles range from rhymed couplets to free verse, and whose topics range from the confessional and the mystical to the political – will read from their collections of poems, some of which have been created over decades.

The poets – who range in age as widely as they do in styles and interests – include Elise Hopkins, Margaret Lark-Russell, Art Sorrentino, Damien

Connolly, and Richard Pierce. They have been working together in regular poetry workshops sponsored by the Stone Village Poetry Experience and facilitated by Tuck Wunderle, who will also read.

The readings will begin at 3 p.m. on Saturday. In case of rain, the readings will take place at the Unitarian Universalist Church in the Stone Village, and will begin at 3:15. For further information, contact tucker-man@terrigenous.com.

Castleton String Quartet to play benefit for MCNP

WESTON, Vt. – New Thought Vermont will present The Castleton String Quartet in concert to benefit My Community Nurse Project (MCNP) on Sunday, April 30, at 4 p.m. at the Walker Farm Theatre in Weston, Vt. There will be no fee for the program, and generous donations to My Community Nurse Project are encouraged.

The Vermont musicians include Weston resident Peter Miller, Wallingford resident Kathryn Luzader, and Rutland residents Sarah Koon and Marina Smakhtina. Selections by Vivaldi, Haydn, and Mozart, as well as lighter fare by Joplin, Ellington, and the Beatles will be featured.



The Castleton String Quartet will play in Weston on April 30, to benefit My Community Nurse Project.

PHOTO PROVIDED

For information, call 802-824-3810 or email info@newthoughtvermont.com.

Chester Alumni Parade seeks participants

CHESTER, Vt. – The Chester Green Mountain Alumni Association will be hosting the annual alumni parade on Saturday, June 10. The parade lineup is at 10 a.m., starting at the Chester Town Hall. Contact John

Clark at 802-353-6043 to register a float or participate in the parade.

Immediately following the parade, all alumni are asked to gather at the Chester American Legion for the annual barbecue.

Also, on Friday, June 9, all alumni are welcome and encouraged to gather at Chester American Legion. A band, Mean Toad Band, all local alumni, will be performing a mix of 70s, 80s, and 90s music.

Any donations to the Chester Green Mountain Alumni Association can be mailed to P.O. Box 882, Chester, VT 05143.

Whiting Library celebrates National Library Week

CHESTER, Vt. – The Whiting Library is celebrating National Library Week, April 23-29. Libraries are full of stories in a variety of formats, from picture books to large print, audiobooks to ebooks, and more. But there's so much more to the story. "Libraries of Things" lend items like museum passes, take away bins, cake pans, and garden tools. Library

programming brings communities together for entertainment, education, and connection through book clubs, story times, lectures, and other opportunities. Library infrastructure advances communities, providing internet and technology access, literacy skills, and support for businesses, job seekers, and entrepreneurs.

Come into the library for National Library Week and put your name into a raffle

to win a puzzle for book lovers. The library trustees are holding a Fill-a-bag Book Sale Friday, April 28, and Saturday, April 29, in the book sale room. Fill a provided grocery bag from Smitty's Chester Market for a small fee. All proceeds go to benefit the library's collection and programs.

For upcoming library events, please visit our website, www.whitinglibrary.org or call 802-875-2277.

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Springfield student wins 2023 Growing Works of Art contest

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – If the number of entries in the

2023 Growing Works of Art contest is any indication,

Vermont students have a deep appreciation for trees, both in their own backyard and local woodlands.

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A total of 228 Grade K-8 students submitted a work of art using any medium, and a written story relating to the theme "Branching Out." For their entry, students were asked to describe a meaningful experience where they have grown, changed, connected, or learned something new because of a tree or trees in their lives.

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The Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program sponsored the annual contest in partnership with University of Vermont (UVM) Extension and the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. Entries were judged half on creativity and originality, and half on how well the student conveyed their story through writing and art. Many of the entries were from schools where the teachers incorporated the contest into their English, art, or science curriculum.

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The top entries are posted online at www.go.uvm.edu/growingart. Locally, Springfield homeschool student Carly Stone was named the winner for eighth graders across the state. Carly's story is as follows:

"MAPLE SYRUP

My great-grandparents had a sugar house and made maple syrup every year. I love maple syrup. I put it on lots of different foods, like pancakes and waffles or maple sugar on muffins that my grandmother makes. But I'm not as much of a fan of maple syrup as my mom and sister. Making maple syrup can be a difficult process and takes a long time. You must boil all the water out of the sap, then it thickens, and then it is ready to be jarred. It can take days to complete this process.

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As you probably know, maple syrup comes from maple trees. In Vermont, maple syrup is a huge industry, so it affects many people here because it makes so many different products. You can make maple candy, syrup, cotton candy, ice cream, and barbecue sauce. In short, I created a maple tree to represent Vermont, the place I have grown up in and love."



LOCAL HISTORY

BY RON PATCH

Ron Patch is a Chester native, past President of Chester Historical Society, and a lifelong antiques dealer.

He can be reached at 802-374-0119 or email ronpatch27@gmail.com

A “novel” idea

I have an idea for a new book. As I go around visiting friends, I hear countless stories of days gone by. Whether it's Bob Turco, Bill Burton, the Kendall family, or Ted and Danny, everyone has stories. I couldn't live long enough to record them all. I've often said, "I wish someone had done a hundred years ago what I do today." Think of what has been lost.

Some of these stories explain how things were done in the past, what really matters, or who Vermonters are as a culture. Some stories make me chuckle. So I asked several friends if they would

write their stories for this book.

Everyone likes the idea. Some say they can't write. I get that, but all you have to do is tell a story as if you were talking with me. Editing can clean it up and make you look good. Although I believe misspellings, improper grammar, sometimes make a story more authentic.

Ever hear of a car race from Chester to Springfield on the old road? That wasn't unusual, but this race was done in reverse gear.

You'll learn about some of our quirky ways. Our language, our way of life that sometimes puzzles newcomers. If nothing else,

we are independent.

I have a number of stories to write. Some are too long for the paper or maybe a little too risqué. I want to write about Vermonters I have known. These stories are fun and revealing.

Some stories can't be shortened to fit my column, because they would lose their value. Some stories will have "naughty words," as Lee Kendall calls them. These are not appropriate for the paper, but will be fine in the book.

One old Vermonter I was buying antiques off said, "let's go up attic." I commented that I hadn't heard that before. He said, "you go down cellar, don't you?"



Gaymont woolen mill in Ludlow.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY RON PATCH

I will ask Kevin Gould and Frank Kendall to submit more of their poetry. Maybe you write poetry. If so I'd like to hear from you.

Over the years I've met a number of Vermonters who create objects of art from out of nothing. For me, folk art is the truest art form. Maybe you create lawn art from found objects. Perhaps you paint or carve. I know we have a number of creative people living amongst us.

I'm not interested in those who already have a voice or platform. I'm looking for the person who creates for their own enjoyment or amusement. Is this you? If so, I would like to talk with you. It would be fun.

I think a good story for someone to write would be the carnival held every summer at the Catholic church. I remember Al Cross, Elmer Butler, and I think Jim Lovett running the muffin tins. The Ferris wheel, other rides, cotton candy, and games of chance or skill are distant memories.

I asked Donna Mitchell Leclair if she would write a few stories. She is on-board with the project and will submit several stories. Donna grew up where Mitch's Maples is today.

Donna sent me a story over the weekend. It's about the time her parents hosted a black boy from New York City through the

Fresh Air Kids program. It is well written, and easy to read.

I will compile the stories, organize, and pre-edit. Amanda will finish editing. Shawntae lays out the pages in the book making it print ready. I love Vermont and its people. If you feel the same way, help me make this happen.

Based on previous books I've written, March is the best time of year to release a book. Cabin fever wanes. A new book will sell well this time of year, so I want to publish next March. So we have time.

This is your chance to record your stories for posterity. Oral history is fine, but lost with passing generations. Leave you kids and grandkids something more permanent.

The photo with this article is the Gaymont woolen mill in Ludlow. Notice the old cars.

This week's old saying is a bumper sticker I once saw: "Pedestrians, New York's number one bumper crop."

Alcohol Awareness Month

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Have you wondered whether alcohol is beginning to negatively impact your life, or that of a loved one? Are you concerned about the number of drinks you are consuming each week, or perhaps you're binge drinking on the weekends? Are you worried about the impact of alcohol on your relationships, your work, your involvement in the criminal justice system, or your overall health?

Vermonters consume more alcohol than the national average, according to the Vermont Department of Health's website. Alcohol is the most abused substance in Vermont, and Vermont deaths due to the overuse of alcohol doubled from 2017 to 2021. These statistics can be found at www.wcax.com/2023/02/08/vermont-alcohol-report-shows-increase-deaths.

Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS), southeastern Vermont's community mental health agency, provides substance use services and is available to help residents of Windham and Windsor counties who want to reduce their alcohol use.

According to HCRS CEO George Karabakakis, Ph.D., "We have seen an increase in people seeking services since the Covid pandemic. Community members have experienced increased stress due to anxiety, isolation, and other impacts of the pandemic, resulting in their turning to alcohol."

HCRS works with clients to look at how they think, make decisions, engage in relationships, address self-care, and set boundaries with others, opening people up to possibilities for change.

Experienced and licensed HCRS counselors are available to help people examine how alcohol use affects

their life. In a respectful, confidential, and non-threatening manner, staff help clients to set their own goals, create strategies to achieve them, and help them to understand and change their relationship with alcohol.

April is Alcohol Awareness Month. Organized by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence in 1987, this awareness event was designed to educate people on the dangers of alcohol, as well as reduce the stigma which often prevents people from seeking help.

To receive alcohol services in southeastern Vermont, reach out to HCRS at 855-220-9429 for the Springfield area. You can also view their website, www.hcrs.org, for more information.

BRAM third floor BRHS exhibit

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Black River Alumni Association and the Black River Academy Museum are collaborating to celebrate the grand opening, on June 10, of the special third-floor room commemorating the history of Black River High School, which educated Ludlow students from 1939 through 2020.

All areas of the museum will be open to the public from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m., and the Black River Senior Center next door will be open for indoor

seating.

Many glass cases in the museum hold new exhibits, including athletic trophies and plaques, and mementos from the Black River High School Band and the Glee Club. Also on display are mannequins of cheerleaders and majorettes, binders of scripts and photos of the school's theatrical productions, and material produced by students who competed in many years of the National History Project. A book signed by every graduating senior since Calvin Coolidge graduated from Black River Academy in 1890 lies in a glass case.

When hunger strikes, step outdoors between the

museum and the senior center for hamburgers, hot dogs, and ice cream sodas. A complete set of yearbooks will be displayed there, with some duplicates for sale. Se-

lected antique trophies and duplicate photos will also be on sale.

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opinion

COMMUNITY NEWS

Dear Editor,

“Time for a Change” Diaper Bank at Parks Place Community Center

I would like to thank all the folks who attended the childcare discussion on April 22 at the Springfield Library.

passion and advocacy they bring to the table. So thanks to Rep. Theresa Wood, the chair of the House Committee on Human Services;

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. — The Edward Jones branch office in Bellows Falls, located at 16 The Square, will be accepting donations for Parks Place Community Center's “Time for a Change” diaper bank.

4 p.m. The items needed for the diaper drive include diapers size 4, 5, and 6, pull ups of all sizes, and baby wipes.

the U.S. and through its affiliate in Canada. The firm's nearly 19,000 financial advisors serve more than 8 million clients with a total of \$1.6 trillion in client assets under care at the end of 2022.

ety. Through the dedication of the firm's approximately 52,000 associates and our branch presence in 68% of U.S. counties, the firm is committed to helping more people achieve financially what is most important to them.

Childcare is not a partisan issue. It is a complex issue that impacts communities, families, and the work force.

If you missed the discussion Saturday, it will be available soon on SAPA T.V. You can also keep track of the bill, S.56, by going to the legislative website, www.legislature.vermont.gov.

Grace Cottage wins Best Place to Work

TOWNSHEND, Vt. — Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital has been named one of Vermont's Best Places to Work in this year's contest.

mont, benefiting the state's economy, workforce, and businesses.

test's two-part process to determine the best places to work in Vermont. First, each nominated company was evaluated for its workplace policies, practices, and demographics.

and used their expertise to determine the final rankings.

I would also like to thank our presenters not only for giving up part of their Saturday morning, but for the

Sincerely, Char Osterlund Chair, Springfield Democratic Town Committee

The award, given each year by Vermont Business Magazine, in partnership with the Vermont Council of the Society for Human Resource Management, the Vermont Department of Commerce and Community Development, and the Workforce Research Group, is designed to identify, recognize and honor the best places of employment in Ver-

Grace Cottage was the only hospital to win an award this year.

process, analyzed the data,

Located in Townshend, Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital includes a 19-bed critical access hospital, with round-the-clock emergency care, inpatient acute care, skilled rehabilitation, lab, and diagnostic imaging; an outpatient rehabilitation department, consisting of physical and occupational therapy; a rural health clinic, providing primary care and mental health services; a retail pharmacy; and a community wellness center.

Dear Editor,

According to a recent story in VT Digger (4/14/23), 40 Readsboro residents signed a petition requesting that the town close its elementary school. The same thing is happening in Windham this year.

and students took turns keeping the beds watered. In September there was a well-attended harvest festival, “Potato Day,” with a bonfire, music, and games.

HCRS named Best Place to Work, Vermont

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. — Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS), southeastern Vermont's nonprofit community mental health agency, was named one of Vermont's Best Places to Work in 2023, for the third year in a row.

questionnaire was also completed by HCRS, providing the agency's policies, practices, and workforce demographics, for the remainder of the assessment.

HCRS offers a generous benefits package, including unique options such as stipends for snow tires and CSAs, interest-free loans for personal computers, and a free meditation app, just to name a few.

and Windsor counties annually. Their staff of more than 500 work out of 16 locations across southeastern Vermont and provide services in local schools and homes, as well as in the community.

A year ago, a group of concerned citizens who appreciate the value of the Windham school founded a non-profit group to show the advantages of town and school cooperation.

Between now and May 20, Windham's Town Meeting Day this year, there will be a vote on the petition to close the school. The petitioner's argument is that parents will have a choice about where their children attend elementary school.

Winners are chosen based on an in-depth, confidential survey of staff covering all aspects of the employee experience.

“We feel honored to receive this important recognition for the third year in a row,” said George Karabakakis, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer at HCRS.

HCRS is based out of Springfield, Vt. and provides mental health, substance use, and developmental disability services for more than 4000 individuals across Windham

Vermont's Best Places to Work program is presented by Vermont Business Magazine, the Vermont Department of Economic Development, the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and the Vermont State Council.

This group of small school supporters also built a row of raised bed gardens with planks donated by a local mill. Students planted the vegetables and flowers they had started in their classrooms, and over the summer, community volunteers

I believe that the people in Windham should reject the petition to close their school, and work together so that the students receive a well-rounded, community-supported, public education in their own village school.

New board members at Parks Place

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. — How does Parks Place Community Resource Center in Bellows Falls stay in touch with a changing world? The staff at Parks Place sees changes every day, and the board of this 25-year nonprofit seeks out differing perspectives.

Kathleen Govotski, activist with the Rotary Club of Bellows Falls and the Chamber of Commerce.

they need to change their lives. Changing lives with the right resources is the Parks Place mission. Gay is the youngest member of the Parks Place board at 29, and she wishes more millennials and gen Z youth would seek board positions.

drugs. You can pick them up from Turning Point during business hours, no questions asked.

Sincerely, John Beagan West Windham, Vt.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Subject to space. May be edited for clarity, grammatical errors, and libelous statements. Must be kept under 400 words. Must include name and town for publication. EFFECTIVE MARCH, 2023, we will be charging for POLITICAL LETTERS. Viewpoints do not necessarily reflect the views of The Vermont Journal & The Shopper.

Weekly SUDOKU by Linda Thistle. Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine. DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: Moderate Challenging HOO BOY!

King Crossword. ACROSS 1 Chantreuse Edith. 5 Links org. 8 Too. 12 Kott of "Today". 13 Filch. 14 500 sheets. 15 Rat —. 16 Eternally. 18 Large gong. 20 Try to hear better, maybe. 21 Author Bagnold. 23 Nabokov novel. 24 Symbol of stability. 28 La Scala solo. 31 — tai (cocktail). 32 Van Gogh venue. 34 Mafia boss. 35 Hostels. 37 Vespers. 39 Secret agent. 41 Ms. Brockovich. 42 Ceremony. 45 Slanted type. 49 The whole crowd. 51 Actress Fisher. 52 Lure. 53 Some coll. degrees. 8 Fleet. 9 "Mona Lisa" painter. 10 Rani's wrap. 11 Portent. 17 Stephen of "Still Crazy". 19 "Puppy Love" singer. 22 Look (into). 24 Brit. record label. 25 Moving vehicle. 26 Genius. 27 Most skeptical. 29 Charged bit. 30 "Life of Pi" director Lee. 33 Tizzy. 36 Gushes forth. 38 Slowpokes. 40 "Rah!". 42 Ms. McEntire. 43 Infamous tsar. 44 High tennis shots. 46 Aspiring atty.'s exam you? 47 "Would — or you?" 48 Shopper's aid. 50 Scot's refusal.

Two important services that Parks Place is focusing on are harm reduction bags, and the diaper bank. Turning Point, which is housed in the carriage barn, has harm reduction bags available. These bags include test strips for drugs, and Narcan — critical, life-saving supplies if someone you love is using

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arts & entertainment

Sara Juli brings new work to Next Stage

PUTNEY, Vt. – Next Stage Arts is excited to welcome Sara Juli, a celebrated solo-performance artist, for a three-day artist-in-residence program. During her residency, Juli will develop her latest work, “Sara Juli’s Naughty Bits,” a piece commissioned by the Strand Theatre in Rockland, Maine.

“Juli has been a meaningful voice out of New York for so many years,” says Keith Marks, Executive Director of Next Stage Arts. “Her work is at the intersection of dance, text, and humor. As she applies those tools to explore sexual trauma, mental health, and victimhood, our

audience will have the opportunity to have input on her new show. The beauty of this is that we will be able to present the show in the fall or winter to our audiences.”

The residency will culminate in two free demonstration showings on April 29, at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. This showing of the piece in development will include an audience discussion with the artist on process, feedback, and dialogue.

“Sara Juli’s Naughty Bits” is a performance piece that explores the impacts of trauma on the brain stemming from sexual assault as a child. Interweaving regressed thinking with a

conflicted inner voice, coupled with finding the humor in the tragic, the work breaks down victimhood to ultimately reclaim the mind.

The performance will ultimately feature an 80s-inspired visual design by Brooklyn-based Dirty Bandits and Justin Moriarty, dramaturgy by Michelle Mola, and costumes by Carol Farrell. Created, written, and performed by Sara Juli, “Sara Juli’s Naughty Bits” will premiere in Maine in October 2023, with a performance scheduled for Next Stage Arts in February 2024.

Carise Blanton and Brittany Ann Tranbaugh

PUTNEY, Vt. – Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music present singer/songwriters Carise Blanton and her quartet, plus Brittany Ann Tranbaugh, at Next Stage on Sunday, April 30, at 7 p.m.

Carise Blanton writes anthems for a world worth saving. Inspired by artists including Nina Simone and Randy Newman, her songs encompass a wide range of genres, from sultry pop to punk-tinged Americana. Whether alone with her electric guitar, or fronting her “handsome band,” Blanton delivers every song with an equal dose of moxie and mischief, bringing her audience together in joyful celebration of everything worth fighting for.

Since releasing her first album in 2002, Blanton has recorded seven more albums, appeared on NPR’s Mountain Stage, and shared

the stage with the likes of Paul Simon, The Weepies, and Shawn Colvin. In February 2011, she toured with Anais Mitchell’s “Hallelujah,” playing the role of Head Fate. Fragile and strong, with lush and cheerful arrangements infused with jazz elements, Blanton’s latest album, “Love and Rage,” is a reminder that the fight for racial and gender equity can – and should – have joyous moments.

Filled with songs bouncing between witty sarcasm and heartbreaking vulnerability, Brittany Ann Tranbaugh’s first EP, “Quarter Life Crisis Haircut,” features her 2022 John Lennon Songwriting Contest Song of the Year winner “Kiss You.” In the last year, Tranbaugh has finally quit her office job to pursue a full-time music career, establishing herself as local

favorite in the Philadelphia music scene, and recording a second EP, “Comets,” to be released this fall.

Next Stage is located at 15 Kimball Hill in downtown Putney, Vt. For information, call 802-387-0102.

Springfield Community Players present “9 to 5”

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Community Players are proud to present “9 to 5 the Musical,” by Dolly Parton, to open the 2023 season. This hilarious musical comedy is set in 1979, and covers themes such as sexism, stereotypes, love, and feminism.

“On the surface the show is about a group of secretaries fighting to gain the respect they deserve from their chauvinist boss, but there’s so much more underneath,” said director and Players President Sara Vitale. “The show deals with how we relate to each other as people, and the stereotypes we carry, but in a really funny, light hearted way.” This is Sara’s third time directing a musical for the Players, her first being “The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee” in 2021, followed by “Gypsy” last year.

“Given my personality in real life, this has definitely been a difficult role to jump into. It’s not easy playing a ‘sexist, egotistical, lying, hypocritical bigot,’” said

Louis Vitale, who plays the boss, Hart, referencing a line from the show, “but it’s been so much fun.”

Samuel Mathewes Clark, who plays mild-mannered Joe, says, “I love the collaboration and sense of community for the show. Everyone is bringing their best self to their characters and the show as a whole. We’re all helping each other to succeed.”

“Even though there has been a lot of progress in the work place with women’s equality, the playing field isn’t level yet. This is a really funny show that deals with some very serious issues that are still relevant today. I’m really enjoying the role of Violet, and digging into what motivates her,” said Ashlee White. “The music and dancing is a wonderful bonus! It’s been so much fun working with this talented cast. I hope our audience enjoys it as much as I do.”

Sara is joined again by musical director Carol Crouce and choreographer Suzanne Stern, along with stage manager Patty Greene-Pawelczyk, and costume designer Ellen Pillsbury, all of whom

worked with her on “Gypsy.” Sara is also mentoring Samantha Wood in assistant directing. The cast includes many faces which have graced the SCP stage in the past, as well as a group of actors who are new to the Players.

“I deeply believe that community theater should be inclusive, and so I’m thrilled that I was able to cast everyone who auditioned. It’s awesome to have first-time actors in my cast, anchored by experienced leads. I couldn’t be more proud of them all,” Sara said.

Shows are May 13 and 20 at 7:30 p.m., and May 14 and 21 at 2 p.m. Doors open half an hour before the show. All seating is general admission. If you require special seating, please reach out to the players at 802-885-4098. Masks are required for May 13 and 14, and are optional for May 20 and 21. Tickets are available by calling the Players at the number above, at the door, or at the website at www.springfieldcommunityplayers.org. It is an intimate, 80-seat theater, so reserving or purchasing tickets in advance is encouraged.

The VAULT calls for submissions

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Local artists are invited to show their work at Gallery at the VAULT in their Open Wall Show. This is a chance to display work in a non-juried show. There is no fee. It is a great opportunity for artists who would like to get their work out there for the first time, as well as for seasoned artists. The next show’s theme is “On The Wild Side.” Artists may bring in two works if they are

18 inches by 20 inches or smaller, or one work if it is larger. Sculpture, pottery, etc. are appreciated just as much as wall art. The work needs to be suitable for viewing by all ages.



Open Wall Show submissions welcome. PHOTO PROVIDED

Artists may bring their creations in on Wednesday,

May 10, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.; Friday, May 12, 11 a.m. –

6:30 p.m.; or Saturday, May 13, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. The show will be on display from May 17 to July 12.

For more information please call Gallery at the VAULT at 802-885-7111. The gallery is located at 68 Main Street in Springfield, Vt., and is open Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., and Fridays 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Gallery at the VAULT is online at www.galleryvault.org, or on Facebook.

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TO LEARN MORE SCAN ME

Kalos and Fern Maddie at Next Stage

PUTNEY, Vt. – Next Stage Arts and Twilight Music present an evening of traditional Celtic and folk music by Kalos – consisting of Eric McDonald, Ryan McKasson, and Jeremiah McLane – and Fern Maddie on Friday, May 5, at 7:30 p.m. at Next Stage.

Three innovative interpreters and composers of Celtic roots music - McDonald on the guitar, mandolin, and vocals; McKasson, on the fiddle, viola, and vocals;

and McLane on the accordion, piano, and vocals - draw on years of experience performing with the likes of Cantrip, Nightingale, The Clayfoot Strutters, and Alasdair Fraser & Natalie Haas, to forge a new musical path as Kalos. They are masters of tradition, who purposefully explore the dark corners floating on its edges, delivering an alluring musical complexity full of spontaneity and joyful exuberance. Their individual artistry

springs from these strong traditional roots, and as a trio they move beyond this foundation, creating music that is compelling enough to transcend boundaries and appeal to music lovers of all stripes. Kalos’ music asks to be shared live, and performance is the band’s heart and forte.

Fern Maddie is a balladeer-songwriter and multi-instrumentalist, playing clawhammer banjo, guitar, and fiddle, and based

in Central Vermont. Her songs exploring themes of trauma, grief, and renewal, and modern interpretations of traditional ballads, have earned national and international acclaim. Her debut album “Ghost Story” was named #2 on The Guardian’s Best Folk Album of 2022, and was listed on NPR’s Best Roots Music of the year.

Next Stage is located at 15 Kimball Hill in downtown Putney, Vt. www.nextstagearts.org.

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Grace Cottage's family-friendly 5K

TOWNSHEND, Vt. – Come out to the Townshend Town Common for the Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital 5K, Saturday, May 13, with an 8:30 a.m. shotgun start.

You can run, walk, roll, stroll, or push your baby carriage for this fun, family-friendly event.

Children younger than 18 can register for free with

signed parent or guardian permission; there is a registration fee for adults. Registration is open at www.gracecottage.org/events. A virtual option is also available. Register at the same link.

Second Wind will provide official timing. Last year's winners were Al Claussen of Townshend, with a time of 18:49, and Kelsey Tad-

dei of Townshend, at 24:44 – while pushing two children in a stroller, and while supervising another child next to her on a bicycle.

For more information, email info@gracecottage.org or call 802-365-9109. All proceeds from this event will benefit health-care services at Grace Cottage.

Springfield Unified Basketball wins against Hartford, Middlebury

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Monday, April 17, after Springfield returned from their spring break, the Cosmos hosted their second home game to the Hartford Hurricanes.

The Cosmos took a 16-10 lead in the first quarter, with buckets from Lexy Bills, Emily Toner, Isaiah Short, Alana Blum and Sebastian Salls.

Coming off strong in the second quarter was senior Tim Jackson with eight points, along with four from Toner, two from Bills, and two from freshman Salls. These buckets gave the Cosmos a 32-26 lead at the half.

In the third quarter, Springfield was able to hold the Hurricanes to scoring seven points to Springfield's 10, which allowed them to keep the lead at 42-33. First time scorer Brianna Salo chipped in two points along with Patrick Toner's two.

In the 4th quarter, buckets from Bills, Jackson, Blum and Salls allowed Springfield to clinch the win. Total points for the night were: Tim Jackson with 14, Emily Toner with 10, Lexy Bills and Sebastian Salls each had eight, Alana Blum brought in four for the night, and Brianna Salo and Isaiah Short each chipped in two points.

The Cosmos then trekked



The Cosmos beat the Hurricanes on April 17. PHOTO PROVIDED

four points in the third quarter, with buckets also from Salo, Bills, Jackson, and P. Toner. Each Cosmo was ready for battle, guarding with enthusiasm and aggressiveness to not let their opponents score a basket.

The Cosmos worked as a team, followed directions, and persevered throughout the contest. With the increase in defense and perseverance, the Cosmos ended the quarter with a 28-24 lead.

In the fourth quarter, the Tigers could not keep up with the determination from each Cosmos player. Springfield doubled the Tigers' points with 12-6 in the 4th quarter. Bills and E. Toner each scored four, and a basket from Jackson and Sam Bailey allowed Springfield to stay on top of their game and end with the win.

For the evening, Lexy Bills led the Cosmo with 14 points, Tim Jackson with eight, Alana Blum and E. Toner each with six, and P. Toner, Brianna Salo and Sam Bailey each chipped in two.

north to take on the Middlebury Tigers on Wednesday, April 19. The trek was worthwhile, as Springfield brought home a win, which brings them to a 2-1 record with three games left to play before playoffs.

After the almost two-hour ride, the Cosmos began the game with points from Bills, E. Toner, and Blum. Senior Blum was a threat to the Tigers with her aggressive rebounds and steals, however, the Tigers took a lead of 12-8 in the first quarter and a 22-16 lead at the half. Tigers #24 Stephen Nucilo and #30 Jayden Mahoney scored a total of 14 points in the first half, and controlled the boards.

In the second half of the game, the Cosmos held the Tigers to scoring only two points, with strong defense from the whole team. Blum's strong defense and steals allowed her to land

Saxtons River fishing derby

SAXTONS RIVER, Vt. – The Saxtons River Rec Area will hold its annual fishing derby Saturday, May 6, at the ponds on Pleasant Valley Road.

Following last year's schedule, there will be three different age groups in three shifts, to help ensure more children can participate with their families.

Children ages 4 to 6 will register at 8 a.m., with fishing beginning at 8:30 a.m. Age group 7 to 10 will register at 9:15 a.m., with fishing starting at 9:45 a.m. Age group 11 through 14 will register at 10:30 a.m., with fishing beginning at 11 a.m.

Children not showing up



Saxtons River fishing derby. PHOTO PROVIDED

appropriate-aged child registered and fishing during their given time. Siblings can be present, but cannot fish.

Adults are responsible for providing their children with all the gear, bait, and assistance needed while at the derby. Participants and families will be required to leave the derby once their age group's session has ended unless there is a sibling in the next age group.

Donations towards expenses will be accepted at the derby, and volunteers of all ages are welcome to contact samanthamperry@hotmail.com, or to get in touch through the Saxtons River Rec Facebook page.

at their correct time will not be able to participate. Families with children in multiple age groups will only be allowed to have the

Forts baseball off to 2023 start

CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – Baseball season has started in the Connecticut River Valley, and the boys of summer – or in this case, springtime – are playing their home openers.

The Charlestown Middle School Forts have entered the 2023 season with a fine roster of 16 eager players. The team came together with a fine, fast, and furious win over Sunapee in the coolness of the afternoon on Tuesday, April 18, at Patch Park in Charlestown.

Ten members of the team are sixth and seventh graders, five from each grade, who will cer-



The Charlestown Middle School Forts 2023 roster. PHOTO PROVIDED

tainly have some playing time, and gain much valuable field experience for next year's schedule. The core group of players this year is the team's six eighth graders,

who had rounded out last year's rebuilding team with some hard-fought wins.

Written by Smokey Aumann.

Clean Water Restoration Roadshow

REGION – The Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) is excited to announce a Clean Water Restoration Roadshow, planned in partnership with Marie Caduto from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC), aimed at highlighting natural resource restoration projects in the Black and Ottauquechee watersheds. Our goal is to increase awareness and transparency around environmental restoration work being done in the state of Vermont. Specifically, the multi-town tour will showcase six projects, from Springfield up to Woodstock, that were funded in part by Vermont's Clean Water Fund.

The event will be held on May 6, beginning at the Springfield Food Coop at 9:30 a.m., with an opportunity to arrive 30 minutes early for coffee and baked goods. From there, we will stop at several sites on the way to Woodstock, ending the day at the Sustainable Woodstock Community Garden. Participants are encouraged to join for one stop, come along for the whole ride, or hop on or off anywhere in between. Find more information or register at www.ctriver.org/event/clean-water-restoration-roadshow.

About the Clean Water Fund – With revenue from the Meals and Room Tax Allocation, Property Tax Surcharge, and unclaimed bottle deposits, the Clean Water Fund supports vari-

ous natural resource restoration projects which aim specifically to improve water quality, as well as provide many other co-benefits such as improvements to wildlife habitat, increased flood resilience, and improvements for recreational access.

This tour will help to illustrate the myriad ways that clean water funding can be used to address storm-water runoff, plant trees, remove unused dams, and protect our wetlands and natural resources. "Clean water funding from the state of Vermont is invaluable in implementing these projects that help to protect and restore our rivers and streams in the Connecticut River watershed," states Kathy Urffer, River Steward for the Connecticut River Conservancy in Vermont.

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home improvement

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CHESTER, Vt. – Chester Townscape is offering hanging baskets to wel-

come spring and beautify your home or business. The hanging baskets – created by a new local grower this year – are in 12-inch fiber pots, to reduce watering

needs. Baskets feature mixed flowers in a choice of four different combinations: for sunny locations in either hot or cool colors, or for shady locations in either hot or cool colors. They are available by pre-order, and will benefit Chester Townscape, the volunteer organization which provides seasonal flowers in bridge boxes, planters, and public gardens in Chester.

To pre-order, download the form from www.chestervt.gov/chester-townscape.html, complete it, and mail it with your check (unless you indicate payment by credit card) by Monday, May 1, to Chester Townscape, PO Box 561, Chester, VT 05143.


Pick-up will take place on Saturday, May 27 from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the information booth on Main Street, across from the Chester Village Green. All money raised helps fund Townscape's beautification projects. For questions or alternative pick-up arrangements, please contact Lynn Russell at chester-townscape@gmail.com or at 802-875-2707.

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Energize Vermont grant supports WindowDressers

ROCKINGHAM, Vt. – Energize Vermont, a nonprofit energy education and advocacy organization, recently announced two grant awards to the Guilford and Rockingham Energy Committees, to support the town's WindowDressers program. Over the last several years, Energize Vermont has granted thousands of dollars to WindowDressers communities. At WindowDressers workshops, community volunteers collaborate to assemble custom-fit plastic film inserts stretched over wooden frames. The Energize Vermont grant is intended to support participation in WindowDressers workshops by lower-income households.

Nancy Detra of the Guilford Energy Committee reflects, "working together in the fall of 2022, about 50 volunteers built 262 window inserts to warm 34 homes and help reduce fuel bills as well as carbon emissions. Our success is due to the goodwill and determina-

tion of community members. We are eager to continue providing free inserts to folks who need them in 2023."

For WindowDressers projects, town Energy Committee volunteers solicit orders for window inserts, and recruit and train volunteer workshop participants. The inserts work like storm windows, but are much less expensive and far easier to install and remove. They fit inside an existing window, adding two insulating spaces and improving the air seal. Window inserts improve the comfort of homes, reduce heating costs, and can reduce carbon footprints.

"I measured a lot of drafty windows in our first two years offering this program, and we heard from many of our customers what a difference the inserts made in their comfort and in lower fuel bills," said Peter Bergstrom of the Rockingham Energy Committee.

Support for WindowDressers is an element of Energize Vermont's Climate Action Project, which promotes a response to climate change that reduces

consumption, limits energy sprawl, and preserves the natural resources that defend Vermont against climate impacts.

The Vermont WindowDressers effort has technical and material support from Maine's non-profit WindowDressers, which developed the community approach to energy savings. Over the history of the project, WindowDressers has conducted hundreds of workshops in Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire. The workshops have engaged thousands of community volunteers, and produced over 48,000 window inserts, with 25-30% of those supplied to low-income households without cost. More information is available at www.windowdressers.org.

Town energy committees or other community groups interested in learning more about Energize Vermont's Grant Program or Vermont Window Project community workshops may contact Becca Dill at beccad@energizevermont.org, or Jack Sumberg, WindowDressers President, at jacksumberg@gmail.com.

For the love of forsythia

REGION – The forsythia has become a beloved and iconic springtime plant, with its dazzling yellow flowers signaling the end of

winter, dotting yards and forest margins throughout Vermont in April.

Forsythias grow readily in Vermont when provided

with full sun and well-draining soil. Those with these beautiful, arching plants in their yards know to give the vigorous growers plenty of space to spread, as forsythias are stoloniferous, which means they spread through the growth of adventitious roots along stem nodes.

Its blossoms, leaves, and fruit have a rich herbal history. In traditional Chinese medicine, forsythia has been used for its anti-inflammatory and anti-viral properties. While usually prepared as a tea made from young leaves, active medicinal compounds are found in the blossoms as well.

Forsythia blossoms can also be used in culinary creations. The delicate, slightly sweet flavor of the flowers pairs well with a variety of ingredients, making them a sustainable and colorful addition to the spring palate.

From traditional medicine to culinary creations and herbal skincare, forsythia blossoms offer a wealth of opportunities to add beauty, elegance, and sustainability to your life.

Written by Kate Ziegler. Full article online at www.vermontjournal.com.

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